"K"

He was a famous man who had lost himself through fear, but found courage in an inspiring woman's love

Mary Roberts Rinehart
tells the story

In the first installment we were introduced to Sidney Page, to Joe Drummond, her boy sweetheart, whom she promised to marry "after years and years," and to K. Le Moyne, the new roomer taken by Sidney and her mother in order to piece out family finances. And in this installment we see Sidney stepping into womanhood and making important decisions right and left.

CHAPTER II.
—2—

Sidney could not remember when her Aunt Harriet had not sat at the table. It was one of her earliest disillusionments to learn that Aunt Harriet lived with them, not because she wished to, but because Sidney's father had borrowed her small patrimony and she was "boarding it out."

Eighteen years she had "boarded it out." Sidney had been born and grown to girlhood; the dreamer father had gone to his grave, with valuable patents lost for lack of money to renew them—gone with his faith in himself destroyed, but with his faith in the world undiminished—for he left his wife and daughter without a dollar of life insurance.

Harriet Kennedy had voiced her own view of the matter, the day after the funeral, to one of her neighbors:

"He left no insurance. Why should he bother? He left me."

To the little widow, her sister, she had been no less bitter, and more explicit.

"It looks to me, Anna," she said, "as if by borrowing everything I had George had bought me, body and soul, for the rest of my natural life. I'll stay now until Sidney is able to take hold. Then I'm going to live my own life. It will be a little late, but the Kennedy's live a long time."

The day of Harriet's leaving had seemed far away to Anna Page. Sidney was still her baby. She had given up her dolls, but she still made clothes for them out of scraps from Harriet's sewing room. In the parlance of the Street, Harriet "sewed"—and sewed well.

She had taken Anna into business with her, but the burden of the partnership had always been on Harriet. To give her credit, she had not complained. She was past forty by that time, and her youth had slipped by in that back room with its dingy wallpaper covered with paper patterns.

On the day after the arrival of the roomer, Harriet Kennedy came down to breakfast a little late. Katie, the general-housework girl, was serving breakfast. Mrs. Page, who had taken advantage of Harriet's tardiness to read the obituary column in the morning paper, dropped it.

But Harriet did not sit down.

"Sidney."

"Yes, Aunt Harriet."

"Sidney, when your father died, I promised to look after both you and your mother until you were able to take care of yourself. That was five years ago. Of course, even before that I had helped to support you."

"If you would only have your coffee, Harriet!"

Mrs. Page sat with her hand on the handle of the old silver-plated coffeepot. Harriet ignored her.

"You are a young woman now. You have health and energy, and you have youth, which I haven't. I'm past forty. In the next twenty years, at the outside, I've got not only to support myself but to save something to keep me after that, if I live."

Sidney returned her gaze steadily.

"I see. Well, Aunt Harriet, you're quite right. You've been a saint to us, but if you want to go away—"

"Harriet!" wailed Mrs. Page, "you're not thinking—"

"Please, mother."

Harriet's eyes softened as she looked at the girl.

"We can manage," said Sidney quietly. "We'll miss you, but it's time we learned to depend on ourselves."

After that, in a torrent, came Harriet's declaration of independence. And, mixed with its pathetic jumble of recriminations, hostility to her sister's dead husband, and resentment for her lost years, came poor Harriet's hopes and ambitions, the tragic plea of a woman who must substitute for the optimism and energy of youth the grim determination of middle age.

"I can do good work," she finished. "I'm full of ideas, if I could get a chance to work them out. But there's no chance here. There isn't a woman on the Street who knows real clothes when she sees them."

Mrs. Page could not get back of Harriet's revolt to its cause. To her, Harriet was not an artist pleading for her art; she was a sister and a breadwinner deserting her trust.

"I'm sure," she said stiffly, "we paid you back every cent we borrowed. If you stayed here after George died, it was because you offered to."

Her chin worked. She fumbled for the handkerchief at her belt. But Sidney went around the table and flung a young arm over her aunt's shoulders.

"Why didn't you say all that a year ago? We've been selfish, but we're not as bad as you think. And if anyone in this world is entitled to success, you are. Of course we'll manage."

Harriet's iron repression almost gave way. She covered her emotion with details:

"Mrs. Lorenz is going to let me make Christine some things, and if they're all right, I may make her trousseau."

"Trousseau—for Christine!"

"She's not engaged, but her mother says it's only a matter of a short time. I'm going to take two rooms in the business part of town, and put a couch in the back room to sleep on."

Sidney's mind flew to Christine and her bright future, to a trousseau bought with the Lorenz money, to Christine settled down, a married woman, with Palmer Howe. She came back with an effort. Harriet had two triangular red spots in her sallow cheeks.

"I can get a few good models—that's the only way to start. And if you care to do handwork for me, Anna, I'll send it to you, and pay you the regular rates. There isn't the call for it there used to be, but just a touch gives dash."

All of Mrs. Page's grievances had worked their way to the surface. Sidney and Harriet had made her world, such as it was, and her world was in revolt. She flung out her hands.

"I suppose I must do something. With you leaving, and Sidney renting her room and sleeping on a folding bed in the sewing room, everything seems upside down. I never thought I should live to see strange men running in and out of this house and carrying latchkeys." This reference to Le Moyne, whose tall figure had made a hurried exit some time before.

Harriet's eyes were brighter already as she went out. Sidney, kissing her in the hall and wishing her luck, realized suddenly what a burden she and her mother must have been for the last few years. She threw her head up proudly. They would never be a burden again—never, as long as she had strength and health!

By evening Mrs. Page had worked herself into a state bordering on hysteria. Harriet was out most of the day. She came in at three o'clock, and Katie gave her a cup of tea. At the news of her sister's condition, she merely shrugged her shoulders.

"She'll not die, Katie," she said calmly. "But see that Miss Sidney eats something, and if she is worried tell her I said to get Doctor Ed."

Very significant of Harriet's altered outlook was this casual summoning of the Street's family doctor. She was already dealing in larger figures. The recklessness of pure adventure was in her blood. She had taken rooms at a rental that she determinedly put out of her mind, and she was on her way to buy furniture. No pirate, fitting out a ship for the highways of the sea, ever experienced more guilty and delightful excitement.

The afternoon dragged away. Doctor Ed was "out on a case" and might not be in until evening. Sidney sat in the darkened room and waved a fan over her mother's rigid form. At half past five Johnny Rosenfeld, from the alley, who worked for a florist after school, brought a box of roses, and departed grinning impishly. He knew Joe, had seen him in the store. Soon the alley knew that Sidney had received a dozen Killarney roses at three dollars and a half, and was probably engaged to Joe Drummond.

* * * * * * *

"Doctor Ed," said Sidney, as he followed her down the stairs, "can you spare the time to talk to me a little while?"

Perhaps the elder Wilson had a quick vision of the crowded office waiting across the Street; but his reply was prompt:

"Any amount of time."

Sidney led the way into the small parlor, where Joe's roses, refused by the petulant invalid upstairs, bloomed alone.

"First of all," said Sidney, "did you mean what you said upstairs?"

Doctor Ed thought quickly.

"Of course; but what?"

"You said I was a born nurse."

The Street was very fond of Doctor Ed. It did not always approve of him. It said—which was perfectly true—that he had sacrificed himself to his brother's career—that for the sake of that brilliant young surgeon, Doctor Ed had done without wife and children; that to send him abroad he had saved and skimped; that he still went shabby and drove the old buggy while Max drove about in an automobile coupe. Sidney, not at all of the stuff martyrs are made of, sat in the scented parlor, and, remembering all this, was ashamed of her rebellion.

"I'm going into a hospital," said Sidney.

Doctor Ed waited. He liked to have all the symptoms before he made a diagnosis or ventured an opinion. So Sidney, trying to be cheerful, and quite unconscious of the anxiety in her voice, told her story.

"It's fearfully hard work, of course," he commented, when she had finished.

"So is anything worth while. Look at the way you work!"

Doctor Ed rose and wandered around the room.

"I don't think I like the idea," he said at last. "It's splendid work for an older woman. But it's life, child—life in the raw. It seems such an unnecessary sacrifice."

"Don't you think," said Sidney bravely, "that you are a poor person to talk of sacrifice? Haven't you always, all your life—"

Doctor Ed colored to the roots of his straw-colored hair.

"Certainly not," he said almost irritably. "Max had genius; I had—ability. That's different. One real success is better than two halves. Not"—he smiled down at her—"not that I minimize my usefulness. Somebody has to do the hack-work, and, if I do say it myself, I'm a pretty good hack."

"Very well," said Sidney. "Then I shall be a hack, too. Of course I had thought of other things—my father wanted me to go to college—but I'm strong and willing. And one thing I must make up my mind to, Doctor Ed; I shall have to support my mother."

Harriet passed the door on her way in to a belated supper. The man in the parlor had a momentary glimpse of her slender, sagging shoulders, her thin face, her undisguised middle age.

"Yes," he said, when she was out of hearing. "It's hard, but I dare say it's right enough, too. Your aunt ought to have her chance. Only—I wish it didn't have to be."

Sidney, left alone, stood in the little parlor beside the roses. She touched them tenderly, absently. Life, which the day before had called her with the beckoning finger of dreams, now reached out grim, insistent hands. Life—in the raw.

CHAPTER III.

K. Le Moyne had wakened early that first morning in his new quarters. Because he was young and very strong, he wakened to a certain lightness of spirit. But he grew depressed as he prepared for the office. He told himself savagely, as he put on his shabby clothing, that, having sought for peace and now found it, he was an ass for resenting it. The trouble was, of course, that he came of a fighting stock—soldiers and explorers, even a gentleman adventurer or two, had been his forefathers. He loathed peace with a deadly loathing.

Having given up everything else, K. Le Moyne had also given up the love of woman. That, of course, is figurative. He had been too busy for women, and now he was too idle. A small part of his brain added figures in the office of a gas company daily, for the sum of two dollars and fifty cents per eight-hour working day. But the real K. Le Moyne, that had dreamed dreams, had nothing to do with the figures, but sat somewhere in his head and mocked him as he worked at his task.

He breakfasted at Mrs. McKee's. The food was rather good, certainly plentiful; and even his squeamish morning appetite could find no fault with the self-respecting tidiness of the place. Some of the "mealers"—the Street's name for them—ventured on various small familiarities of speech with Tillie. K. Le Moyne himself was scrupulously polite but reserved. He was determined not to let the Street encroach on his wretchedness. Because he had come to live there was no reason why it should adopt him. But he was very polite. When the deaf-and-dumb book agent wrote something on a pencil pad and pushed it toward him, he replied in kind.

"We are very glad to welcome you to the McKee family," was what was written on the pad.

"Very happy, indeed, to be with you," wrote back Le Moyne—and realized with a sort of shock that he meant it.

The kindly greeting had touched him. The greeting and the breakfast cheered him also, he had evidently made some headway with Tillie.

"Don't you want a toothpick?" she asked, as he went out.

In K's previous walk of life there had been no toothpicks; or, if there were any, they were kept, along with the family scandals, in a closet. But

"I Don't Think I Like the Idea," He Said.

nearly a year of buffeting about had taught him many things. He took one, and placed it nonchalantly in his waistcoat pocket, as he had seen the others do.

Change was in the very air of the Street that June morning. It was in Harriet, asserting her right to live; in Sidney, planning with eager eyes a life of service which did not include Joe; in K. Le Moyne, who had built up a wall between himself and the world, and was seeing it demolished by a deaf-and-dumb book agent whose weapon was a lead pencil pad!

And yet, for a week nothing happened. Joe came in the evenings and sat on the steps with Sidney, his honest heart in his eyes. Anna, no longer sulky, accepted with childlike faith Sidney's statement that "they'd get along; she had a splendid scheme," and took to helping Harriet in her preparations for leaving. And K. Le Moyne, finding his little room hot in the evenings and not wishing to intrude on the two on the doorstep, took to reading his paper in the park, and after twilight to long, rapid walks out into the country. The walks satisfied the craving of his active body for exercise, and tired him so he could sleep.

When K. was sure that the boy had gone, he would turn back toward the Street. Some of the heaviness of his spirit always left him at sight of the little house. Its kindly atmosphere seemed to reach out and envelop. Within was order and quiet, the freshness of his turned-down bed, the tidiness of his ordered garments.

Life, that had seemed so simple, had grown very complicated for Sidney. There was her mother to break the news to, and Joe. Harriet would approve, she felt; but these others! To assure Anna that she must manage alone for three years, in order to be happy and comfortable afterward—that was hard enough. But to tell Joe that she was planning a future without him, to destroy the light in his blue eyes—that hurt.

* * * * * * *

After all, she told K. first. One Friday evening, coming home late as usual, he found her on the doorstep, and Joe gone. She moved over hospitably. The moon had waxed and waned, and the Street was dark. The colored man who drove Doctor Ed in the old buggy on his daily rounds had brought out the hose and sprinkled the street. Within this zone of freshness, of wet asphalt and dripping gutters, Sidney sat, cold and silent.

"Please sit down. It is cool now. My idea of luxury is to have the Street sprinkled on a hot night."

K. disposed of his long legs on the steps. He was trying to fit his own ideas of luxury to a garden hose and a city street.

"I'm afraid you're working too hard."

"I? I do a minimum of labor for a minimum of wage."

"But you work at night, don't you?"

K. was natively honest. He hesitated. Then:

"No, Miss Page."

"But you go out every evening!" Suddenly the truth burst on her.

"Oh, dear!" she said. "I do believe—why, how silly of you!"

K. was most uncomfortable.

"Really, I like it," he protested. "I hang over a desk all day, and in the evening I want to walk. I ramble around the park and see lovers on benches—it's rather thrilling."

Quite suddenly Sidney laughed.

"How very nice you are!" she said—"and how absurd! Don't you know that, if you insist on walking the streets and parks at night because Joe Drummond is here, I shall have to tell him not to come?"

This did not follow, to K.'s mind. They had rather a heated argument over it, and became much better acquainted.

"If I were engaged to him," Sidney ended, her cheeks very pink, "I—I might understand. But, as I am not—"

"Ah!" said K., a trifle unsteadily. "So you are not?"

What do you make of K. Le Moyne by this time? And suppose your daughter, at the age of eighteen, decided to be a trained nurse—would you let her take up the work?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

EXCELLENT TRAIT IS CAUTION

Better to Be Sure Before You Move Than to Have Occasion for Vain Regrets.

Caution is the parent of safety. It is better to use caution in time than regrets too late. It is better to give the mind some exercise in consideration before beginning a new thing, remarks the Milwaukee Journal. It is wise to make friends slowly. Some people like to boast of being "so impulsive," and think that this should be an acceptable excuse for many failings. Impulse is often a good thing, but it needs a long course of careful training before it can be safely indulged. First impressions are often deceiving. One may not at first be attractive in appearance, but on further acquaintance, prove to be admirable in character. Those who are impulsive in making professions of friendship are not entirely to be depended on to be permanent or reliable. In giving way to a strong liking or aversion one often does injustice. Acquaintance is quite as likely to show admirable as unlikable qualities. Often an aversion has been changed to a deep and true friendship. And, on the other hand, some who appear admirable on first meeting, prove otherwise. Do not judge hastily on the impulse of a moment. Acts done on the impulse of the moment may cause repentance for many a year.

The Source of "You All."

In a recent Sunday edition there were citations from the Old and New Testaments and from Shakespeare, wherein the expression "you all" and similar expressions were used, quoted in justification thereof. Allow me to add a classical authority, no less than Cicero, who repeatedly used the expression "vos omnes"—"you all." Just as this is of the Augustan age of Latinity, its high water mark in literature, so "you all" is English of the purest type. I once was ashamed of the speech of our southern mountaineers, thinking that it arose from ignorance and lack of cultivation, but I have since realized that they were speaking a purer type of English than were our college men, believing, as I now do, that the nearer the source the purer the issue therefrom.—Letter to the New York Times.

Editorial Comment.

Dear Sir: We are herewith returning the alleged poem you submitted entitled, "Oh, for the Wings of a Dove." For your information we might add that, if you keep on singing in that strain, you will soon be willing to compromise on a second-hand cheese sandwich.

When Flowers Are Most Fragrant.

Flowers are more fragrant when the sun is not shining on them, according to a French scientist, because the oils that produce the perfume are forced out by the water pressure in the plant cells, and this is diminished by sunlight.

In Woman's Realm

Especial Display of Trimmings on Gowns for Every Occasion Is a Marked Feature of the Season's Modes—Some of the Latest Ideas In Camisoles and Hosiery That Are Popular Just Now.

All that glitters is not gold or there wouldn't be enough glitter to go round this season. An army of things that sparkle and gleam has invaded the realm of fashion and is established everywhere—except on morning gowns. In company with fur bands and hand embroidery it came and saw and conquered, and now even boudoir gowns are lavishly ornamented with all three. Spangles of gold and silver and in colors, glass and metal beads and jet of-silver combined with satin ribbon and silver-run lace. The lace is laid over the ribbon in the body of this brilliant little garment, and it is edged with a narrow ruffle of crepe. An insertion of silver is used in alternating long and short tabs that fall from the lace at the top of the camisole. The waist is bound with silver ribbon and there are shoulder straps made of it.

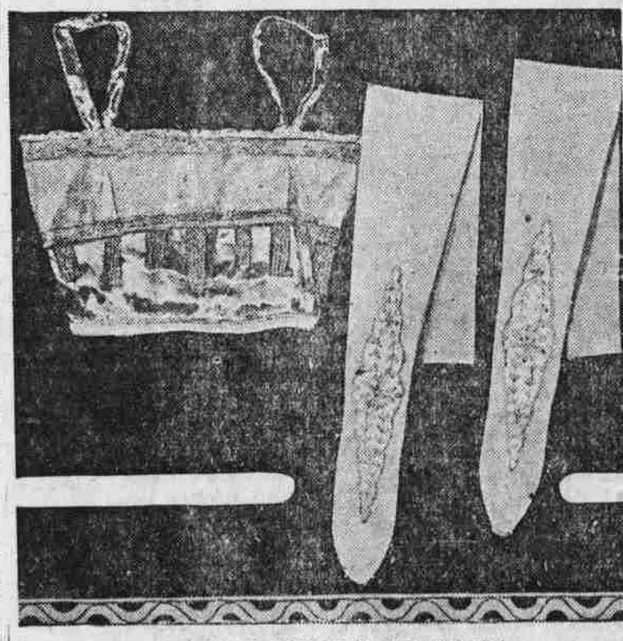
The possessor of such a rich piece of finery never intends that it shall blush

CLASSIC L[illegible] AFTERNOON GOWN

are used with metallic laces for the enrichment of afternoon and evening gowns.

Beads and a fur of fabric, imitating broadtail, have been wonderfully well managed in ornamenting the lovely afternoon gown pictured here. The classic Greek robe might have inspired the fashioning of this model for it hangs in long lines from shoulder to hem. It is made of black georgette crepe with six bands of the broadtail fabric about the skirt. The long, narrow girdle is covered with beads and weighted with tassels at the ends. It encircles the waist, is crossed at the back and brought back to the front where one end is looped over the other. This unseen or waste any of its sweetness. It is distinctly intended to gleam through a mere mist of a blouse, or a veil of a waist.

As to her feet, the modern maid intends that they shall be worth looking at. There is a new order of things in hosiery, with silk stockings elaborated in many ways, some of them beautiful and elegant and others beautiful and daring. Among the first class there are silk stockings with inlays of lace like those in the picture and others embroidered with steel beads. There are white panels (woven in colored hose) that serve for a background for fine embroidery. In the daring class spangles flourish. A startling hose it



GLIMPSING CAMISOLES AND HOSIERY

management of the waistline is centuries old, but has never been improved upon.

The sleeve is especially graceful, fitting the arm at the shoulder and gradually widening to the wrist. It is split on the outer side and its edges are defined with two rows of beads. The graceful "V" neck is finished in the same way and has a set-in piece of white georgette at the point, which may be more or less high. Black and steel beads are introduced in the embroidered figures on the bodice. Fine artistry is written in every detail of this gown.

Wonders in camisoles are brought to the fascinated eyes of mortals in these days of diaphanous gowns and filmy blouses. Long ago camisoles appropriated lustrous satins and silks and delicate laces and went as far as possible with their materials, in the direction of luxury. Just a glance at the accompanying picture shows that they have gone a step further. This last word in camisoles is made of cloth and it may be either gathered or boxplaited.

black silk has lizards of green and silver wriggling up the instep; but not much attention need be given to stockings with decorations made solely to attract it. There is too much to consider that is more worth while.

Julia Bottomley

A Milliner's Idea.

The newest idea of the milliners is bound to reap a goodly harvest. This is the assembling of a matched group of articles that beguile the extra dollars out of the pocket. A hat, for instance, then a shopping bag, a neckpiece and sometimes spats to carry the scheme from crown to heel.

Even when the collar does not match the hat in material, it is arranged to bring about complete harmony between the two, and the perceptible advantage is so apparent to a woman that she cannot refrain from accepting the milliner's suggestion.

Trunk Cover.

It is always to be regretted when a trunk must of necessity be kept in any room. But if it is impossible to stow it in a closet, it has to be made the best of. Do not try to make it look like something else. But there is no harm in trying to make it more beautiful. This can be done by making a cretonne or a plain color cover to slip over it. The cover is made with a top exactly fitting the top of the trunk and on which a flounce is attached. The flounce should reach to the floor.

New Suiting Material.

A new fabric just put out by an American factory is woven to imitate jersey cloth, but the back is finished like broadcloth and colored to contrast with the face side so that suits and coats can be made up with reversed laps and bindings. This material will probably be very popular for sport clothes, as it has none of the disadvantages of jersey cloth.

MORE WHEAT, MORE CATTLE, MORE HOGS

Land Values Sure to Advance Because of Increasing Demand for Farm Products.

The cry from countries abroad for more of the necessaries of life is acute today; tomorrow it will be still more insistent, and there will be no letup after the war. This is the day for the farmer, the day that he is coming into his own. He is gradually becoming the dictator as it becomes more apparent that upon his industry depends the great problem of feeding a great world. The farmer of Canada and the United States has it within himself to hold the position that stress of circumstances has lifted him into today. The conditions abroad are such that the utmost dependence will rest upon the farmers of this continent for some time after the war, and for this reason there is no hesitation in making the statement that war's demands are, and for a long time will be, inexhaustible, and the claims that will be made upon the soil will with difficulty be met. There are today 25,000,000 men in the fighting ranks in the old world. The best of authority gives 75 per cent and over as having been drawn from the farms. There is therefore nearly 75 per cent of the land formerly tilled now being unworked. Much of this land is today in a devastated condition and if the war should end tomorrow it will take years to bring it back to its former producing capacity.

Instead of the farmer producer producing, he has become a consumer, making the strain upon those who have been left to do the farming a very difficult one. There may be agitation as to the high cost of living, and doubtless there is reason for it in many cases. The middleman may boost the prices, combines may organize to elevate the cost, but one cannot get away from the fact that the demand regulates the supply, and the supply regulates the price. The price of wheat—in fact, all grains—as well as cattle, will remain high for some time, and the low prices that have prevailed will not come again for some time.

After the war the demand for cattle, not alone for beef, but for stock purposes, to replenish the exhausted herds of Europe, will be keen. Farm educators and advisers are telling you to prepare for this emergency. How much better it can be done on the low-priced lands of today, on lands that cost from ten to twenty dollars per acre, than it can on two and three hundred-dollar-an-acre land. The lands of Western Canada meet all the requirements. They are productive in every sense of the word. The best of grasses can be grown with abundant yields and the grain can be produced from these soils that beats the world, and the same may be said of cattle and horses. The climate is all that is required.

Those who are competent to judge claim that land prices will rise in value from twenty to fifty per cent. This is looked for in Western Canada, where lands are decidedly cheap today, and those who are fortunate enough to secure now will realize wonderfully by means of such an investment. The land that the Dominion Government is giving away as free homesteads in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta are of a high class; they are abundant in every constituent that goes to make the most productive soils. The yields of wheat, oats and barley that have been grown on these lands gives the best evidence of their productiveness, and when backed up by the experience of the thousands of settlers from the United States who have worked them and become wealthy upon them, little more should be required to convince those who are seeking a home, even with limited means, that nowhere can they secure anything that will better equip them to become one of the army of industry to assist in taking care of the problem of feeding the world. These lands are free; but to those who desire larger holdings than 160 acres there are the railroad companies and land corporations from whom purchase can be made at reasonable prices, and information can be secured from the Canadian Government agent, whose advertisement appears elsewhere in this paper.—Advertisement.

Advantages.

"Do you think there is really any good in the proposed two-cent-and-a-half piece?"

"Certainly. Then, when you have a nickel in church, you can go to the foreign missions fifty-fifty."

Horrors of War.

First Tramp—Dis war is a curse, Bill!

Second Tramp—It's orful, Jake! Every freight car loaded full o' ammunition! Not a good, comfortable "empty" anywhere to be found!

Contrariwise.

"Funny discovery, wasn't it, the food speculators made?"

"What was that?"

"That their live turkeys were a dead loss."

Cause and Effect.

"Billfins is a true son of the soil."

"Is that why he always looks so seedy?"

The Right Kind.

"Where can I find some good current literature?"

"Try those manuals of electricity."